

**Senator Joe
Keaveny**

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MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

Senator Keaveny Files Law Enforcement Legislation
Bills Tackle Unclaimed Property, Officer Identity

JEFFERSON CITY — Senator Joe Keaveny, D-St. Louis, today filed legislation to streamline the process of disposing of unclaimed property and another bill designed to protect the identity of police officers in certain situations.

Senator Keaveny filed [Senate Bill 853](#) regarding unclaimed property in response to the findings of a recent state audit of the St. Louis Board of Police Commissioners. The auditor found that the St. Louis Police Department was inundated with a backlog of unclaimed property seized during the course of numerous investigations. The auditor also found that because the police department was required to store evidence for cases that were not being prosecuted, evidence had gone missing, had been mislabeled or misplaced. Prior to the release of the audit, the police department had drafted a strategic plan to improve the organization of its evidentiary unit. Officials with the police department say Sen. Keaveny's bill is needed to implement the new strategic plan.

Under current law, a law enforcement agency must request that the prosecuting or circuit attorney file a motion for the disposition of unclaimed seized property. If the prosecuting attorney fails to file the motion within 60 days, the law enforcement agency can request the attorney general to file the motion. Senator Keaveny's bill would allow the law enforcement agency to file a similar motion if the prosecuting attorney or attorney general fails to do so in a timely manner.

"The police department adds more than 32,000 pieces of evidence to its evidentiary storage unit each year, but it's difficult to keep track of it all, especially for cases that never get prosecuted or fail to be prosecuted within the statute of limitations," Sen. Keaveny said. "My bill just gives the police department the ability to dispose of unclaimed property that's no longer needed as evidence in a case."

Senator Keaveny says his legislation will allow law enforcement agencies to sell unclaimed property if the agency files a motion and the court grants the motion, returning thousands of dollars to the county treasury.

Senator Keaveny also filed legislation designed to protect the identity of police officers in certain investigations. [Senate Bill 854](#) prohibits identifying a police officer, other than one who is the subject of a criminal investigation, from being disclosed. Under the proposal, the identity of the officer may be disclosed to a person who is investigating a civil claim or defense relating to the investigative report, or to a person who initiated legal action asking a court to disclose the identity. The court would then weigh the benefit to the person or the public against the harm to the officer. Senator Keaveny notes this is the same procedure used in current law when a person seeks disclosure of currently protected information in an investigative report.

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